

## *SECTION 7: RECRUITMENT AND MARKETING*

### *INTRODUCTION*

### *DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE MARKETING PLAN*

### *RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES*

### *STUDENT MOTIVATION AND RETENTION*

### *REFERENCES AND RESOURCES*

#### *1. Introduction*

Effective marketing and recruitment are necessary for an adult education program to succeed in reaching the people in the county in need of Adult Education services. In this section, you will find tips to developing a marketing plan and creative recruitment strategies.

#### *2. Developing an Effective Marketing Plan*

The following steps to developing an effective marketing plan are adapted from Barabara Mednick's *10 Steps to an Effective Marketing Plan*:

##### **Define Product or Service**

\* Describe adult education services offered to your community.

- GED instruction
- Help with math, English and reading for eligible high school and GED graduates who want to go to college and/or get a better job
- Family literacy services
- Helping with learning to read
- English classes for immigrants
- Adult education at the workplace
- Kentucky Employability Certificate
- Kentucky Manufacturing Skills Standard certificate

## Identify the Target Audience

- \* Who do you serve?
  - To identify your target population, see Section 9: Program Design and Management, on how to conduct a needs analysis.

## Determine Goals and Objectives

- \* Set the bar as to what you want to achieve.
- \* Measure your success against your own efforts, not your competitors.
- \* Two types of goals:
  - Quantitative – those with specific, measurable results and numbers.
  - Qualitative – bring increased value, like improving image or visibility to the program, and improved quality of life to students.

## Define the Brand

- \* Focus your message by identifying 3 to 4 “key messages” to be woven through all marketing materials.
  - GED: Prove Yourself
- \* To succeed, focus on a particular market and emphasize benefits to them.

## Communicating Services Cost

- \* All Kentucky adult education services are free and convenient.

## Establish Marketing Budget

- \* Set aside a specific dollar amount either per quarter or per year. You need to make the best marketing decisions possible to maximize the return on your marketing dollars invested.
- \* Evaluate marketing decisions such as advertising in the yellow pages, specialty or trade magazines, local community publications, etc.
- \* Track each initiative and evaluate what worked, what didn't.

## Choose Marketing Strategies

- \* Brainstorm ideas to reach the target audience. Be creative — don't sensor wild ideas.
  - Flyers
  - Newsletters
  - Class schedules
  - Signage
  - Business cards

- Postcards
- Brochure
- Advertisements
- TV and radio spots
- Billboards
- Informational booth at community fairs/events

\* Divide into paid, non-paid and non-traditional media.

- Paid media: direct mail, newspaper, radio, TV, billboards, direct sales
- Non-paid media: referred to as public relations because it is exposure through traditional media without paying for advertising in that media.
- Non-traditional media: includes everything else — sponsorships, ad specialties, shows/events, electronic media and the Internet.

### **Determine Tactics**

\* List out specific action steps to achieve each strategy.

\* Include deadlines and key dates for executing all of your marketing activities.

### **Establish Timing**

\* Establish a specific timetable for each tactic.

### **Measure Results**

\* Track results of your marketing efforts on an ongoing basis, using tracking devices such as ad codes, call-in logs and reply cards.

\* Evaluate at the end of the fiscal year to see if the results matched your stated goals.

### **Pulaski County Marketing Plan Example**

#### **PULASKI COUNTY ADULT LEARNING AND LITERACY PROGRAM**

Adult Education Learning Center  
500-2 Chandler Street  
Somerset, KY 42501

PHONE: 606.679.7030 and 606.677.1780

FAX: 606.451.0945

**MARKETING PLAN**

## **OBJECTIVE**

- To inform and educate the public and the economic community about the varied services provided through the adult education and literacy program and encourage their participation in the program.

## **GOALS**

- To reach individuals/agencies/businesses/organizations in the community that may need the services provided through the adult education and family literacy program.
- To utilize various advertising, publicity, recruitment tools and materials, and strategies for different types of targeted markets (adult literacy, family literacy, English as a Second language, workplaces/businesses, state and local government agencies, civic community, and professional organizations, and individuals in the community).
- To increase the enrollment of students in the adult education and family literacy program to meet state's enrollment goals for the local program.

## **STRATEGIES**

- Adhere to the program's mission statement.
- List the program's services with a brief description/synopsis and stress that services are free to students.
- Devise and conduct training programs that will make and/or increase the awareness of the services.
- Network, partner and make alliances with other programs, agencies, businesses, organizations, etc.
- Design and implement marketing and promotional plans, communication and different kinds of advertisements.
- Monitor the results of program's marketing plan. Find out what works by using surveys, questionnaires and program/instructor evaluations. Revise as needed.

## **RECRUITMENT/PUBLICITY/ADVERTISING PLANS**

- Marketing Communications
- Media Relations
- Information by Word of Mouth (Networking) – Special Events (Outreach)
- Advertising/Advertisements

### **Marketing Communications**

1. Pass out business cards.
2. Include a "signature line" file to use for E-mail messages.
3. Get "testimonials" from former or current students.
4. Have a nametag or pin for each staff member with the program's name.
5. Select a slogan and use it in all communications-letterheads, business cards, envelopes, etc.
6. Use eye-catching stationery, paper, envelopes, etc.
7. Use program/class evaluation forms and convey the results in ads/articles/surveys.

8. Update the program's Web page.
9. Include information from all adult education staff on the school systems teacher Web pages.
10. Write, format and distribute education/teaching "how to" handouts at meetings, job fairs, agencies, etc.

### **Media Relations**

1. Write and submit a monthly column for the local newspaper.
2. Publish an article, column and/or ad in specialty magazines/publications: Southern Kentucky Health and Fitness, Southern Kentucky Home and Family, Pulaski Pulse, and Kentucky Families Today.
3. Write and send timely news release to local newspaper.
4. Appear on the radio or TV ads.
5. Make use of public service announcement on the radio and the local cable station.
6. Make a publicity photo and use with news release and stories.
7. Write a letter to the editor about the success of adult education and its services.
8. Create an annual student award and publicize it.

### **Information by Word of Mouth (Networking) – Special Events (Outreach)**

1. Join local organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce.
2. Mail informational materials/brochures to local civic/businesses organizations.
3. Serve on a board or advisory committees.
4. Hold an "open house" yearly.
5. Set up a booth at job fairs and other types of fair/trade shows.
6. Offer to give a speech or presentation for a career day, job fair, or school, PTA, etc.
7. Write and distribute a "How to or Did You Know" booklet/handouts with a "Compliments of ....." notation.
8. Appear at events and network with those who are there.
9. Use personal contacts and network.
10. Customize training/classes/workshops/seminars for interested organizations and businesses.
11. Use every available contact to exchange information that will make your program known in the community and workforce.
12. Train the staff and students to promote referrals.

### **Advertising**

1. Include URL and e-mail address on all marketing materials.
2. Have phone stickers preprinted with contact information.
3. Have Rolodex® cards printed with adult education contact information.
4. Get notepads printed with adult education contact information in the letterhead.
5. Buy "sticky" notes and attach a top sheet advertising adult education.
6. Make "recipe" cards with a "catchy" title selling adult education.
7. Advertise in specialty or trade magazines.
8. Advertise in the "Yellow Pages".
9. Write an ad geared toward non-English market. Write the ad in Spanish or Japanese.
10. Display a collection of brochures, flyers, etc. in the center's reception area.
11. Make a "marketing kit". Including such things as business cards, list of staff and their biographies, list of services, program information, testimonials, evaluation results, awards information, program facts and figures, etc.

### *3. Recruitment Strategies*

- Arrange to speak to agencies, clubs, and organizations about adult education services
- Build strong partnerships with local business and industry
- Establish student referral programs with groups or organizations that have an interest in serving adult education students
- Distribute brochures, posters, flyers that describe adult education services throughout your county – grocery store, churches, library, health department, schools, banks, government agencies, etc.
- Circulate bilingual marketing materials
- Present program videos to community organizations
- Ask grocery stores and other businesses to print your information on bags
- Use public service announcements on radio and television
- Hold a “bring a friend” get-together
- Submit success stories to business and educational institutions for newsletters
- Place student success stories in local newspapers
- Set up booths/displays at local events and shopping centers
- Dispense table tents/placemats to restaurants
- Hand out bookmarks, pencils, bumper stickers, and doorknob hangers
- Put inserts in church bulletins
- Suggest inserts be included in utility bills and public assistance checks
- Place class schedules in community calendars in local newspaper
- Host an open house

### *4. Student Motivation and Retention*

#### **Adult Learners - Keep Them Involved, Motivate Them, Retain Them**

by Mary Sharp

Adult learners come to class to improve their skills and for many other reasons that we as educators seek to understand and to address. In this article, I will elaborate on approaches to instruction that go beyond content to provide adult learners with a total learning experience that engages them, motivates them to participate, and encourages their persistence in the program they have chosen.

#### **Overcoming Barriers to Persistence in the Adult Learner’s World**

##### **“Help them believe in themselves.”**

Many adult learners come to class with low self-esteem. Repeated attempts to acquire knowledge and skills may have resulted in failure. It is helpful for the instructor to remind students that failure is a necessary step on our way to success. I share with students some of my failures that turned into a better experience later on. When every attempt to participate in the class is recognized and valued despite errors, students are more comfortable and willing to take a risk.

**“Sorry, no drive-thru!”**

After the first few classes, adult learners begin to realize that learning new skills may take a longer period of time than they had originally expected. The gap between expectation and fulfillment may be especially wide for adult learners at the basic education level. Reasonable short-term goals, the achievement of which can be measured by testing, can give these students an experience of success. Guadalupe Ruvalcaba, director of The San Antonio Independent School District Adult and Community Education Department, describes this process with a lively image: “We eat the elephant one bite at a time.”

**“When the gauge reads nearly-empty...”**

Many adult learners come to class after many hours at the workplace or in a care-intensive home. Tired students are aided by frequent change of material studied and by active participation. Learning activities that call for standing or walking to another part of the room are stimulating. I encourage students to toss a light weight toy to their classmates to choose the next person to take part in an exercise. Interest and enthusiasm run high!

**“My family comes first.”**

This is not a barrier to the adult learner’s persistence; it is a boundary created by many learners’ values, a line which will not be crossed. Respect for the learner’s priority of family care and a flexible attitude often lead to retention even when the student is missing classes due to a family matter. In The San Antonio Independent School District Adult and Community Education Department and at The Bob Billa Family and Community Resource and Learning Center instructors are encouraged to call students who are missing class. The telephone call may bring a learner’s family health concern or bereavement to the attention of the instructor, whose sensitivity at this time often results in the adult learner returning to class as soon as possible. Adult education instructors are given the Student Follow Up Form in order to log the telephone calls to students and add comments as needed. These records are kept in the instructor’s Required Instructional Development Handbook and are available to supervisors to keep them advised of the adult learners’ needs.

**Creating a Classroom Learning Community****“We’re playing on our home court!”**

I have enjoyed participating in professional development workshops called Quantum Learning. One of the concepts introduced in this program is called “The Home Court Advantage” to ensure student success. I ask myself how to make our classroom more like the adult learners’ “home court.” When I began teaching as a substitute, I introduced myself on the first day of class as “Ms. Mary.” The adult students responded by introducing themselves as “Ms. Terri,” “Ms. Andrea,” “Mr. Greg,” and so on. I have always addressed adult learners as “Ms.” or “Mr.” ever since that day, and their response has been positive. To help the adult learner feel welcome in the classroom, I greet each student with a handshake as that person arrives. There is also the “Congratulations” handshake as each student prepares to leave at the end of class.

Once adult learners are familiar with their learning environment and understand their importance in the class, they are experiencing “the home court advantage.” Teamwork is a key to their success in this positive learning experience. Guidance from classmates who are mentors reassures and inspires learners who are experiencing difficulty. Classmates who serve as mentors generally experience growth in their communication skills.

**Student Goal-Setting and Progress Tracking****“Doing it their way...”**

In working for San Antonio Region 20, for The San Antonio Independent School District Adult and Community Education Department and for The Bob Billa Community and Family Resource and Learning Center, I have found that these three interrelated organizations share a commitment to interviewing adult students about

their personal goals for the learning process. Each program has created learner-friendly forms that invite the student to create and share his or her personal definition of success as an adult learner. Some examples:

- Parent/Community Survey
  - Type of class you are interested in attending
  - Times of class (that suit your needs)
- Achievements of Participants (based on their transitional goals)
- Evaluation of the Adult Education Program

#### **“Progress Tests-Do the math.”**

Accountability for instructors of adult learners in Texas is ensured by the administration of standardized baseline tests followed by standardized progress tests at regular intervals. Adult learners appreciate the scores and level indicators that give them an objective measure of their progress in reading, writing and math skills. Instructors take the time to share test results with adult learners, both previous scores and levels and actual scores and levels. The positive effect on retention is well worth the time.

### **Community Partners in the Employment Field**

#### **“Telling it like it is.”**

The 2006 conference “Charting the Course Toward Success” was a joint project of Texas’ South Central Project GREAT, Alamo WorkSource, City of San Antonio and Adult Education and Family Literacy Programs from within the South Central Region. The conference afforded employment counselors and instructors of adult education and family literacy the opportunity to meet local employers and appreciate the employers’ priorities regarding the communication skills and knowledge that increase the adult learner’s chance to be hired and to succeed in the workplace.

For a work-related lesson, highly-practical learning activities such as the following are received with enthusiasm by adult learners: writing a fax as one business representative communicating to another, writing a fax or e-mail to a co-worker or supervisor, writing a note in order to bring a need or suggestion to the attention of a supervisor, filling-out an application, writing a resume, and explaining a procedure to classmates as a training experience.

#### **A final note...**

We have considered approaches to retention of adult learners. A common thread is to increase their sense of self-worth. Each student knows that he or she is valued when we encourage every effort, appreciate each individual’s definition of success, respect priorities, provide clear and objective indicators of progress, and facilitate advancement in the employment field. It is hoped that all adult students will regard us as both instructors and friends. As adult learners are on their way to the classroom, may their experience be as memorable as an African proverb:

“To the house of a friend the way is never long.”



## 5. Resources and References

Buchanan, Rena. Pulaski County Adult Education, Pulaski County Marketing Plan.

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